

CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all previous versions and listings of claims.

Listing of Claims

1. (currently amended) A gaming method wherein an array of symbols is displayed and an award is granted based on the displayed array of symbols, the method comprising:

displaying on a first display screen of a gaming machine, in a first game, a first array of randomly selected symbols on a first set of virtual reels, the first array including at least one special symbol in a first position in the first array;

granting any award to the player for the first game based upon combinations of symbols across the first set of virtual reels displayed in the first game including combinations of symbols that include the at least one special symbol as part of a combination of symbols;

concurrently displaying on a second display screen of the gaming machine, in a second game, a second array of randomly selected symbols on a second set of virtual reels, the second array of symbols being randomly selected independently of the first array of symbols;

shifting a position of the at least one special symbol in the first array to a second position in the second array on the second display screen, wherein the shifted special symbol is combinable with the randomly selected symbols in the second array to form winning combinations of symbols; and

granting any award to the player for the second game based upon combinations of the symbols across the second set of virtual reels displayed in the second game including combinations of symbols that include the at least one special symbol as part of a combination of symbols.

2. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein shifting a position of the at least one special symbol in the first array from the first position to the second position comprises randomly shifting a position of the at least one special symbol from the first position to the second position.

3. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein shifting a position of the at least one special symbol in the first array from the first position to the second position comprises shifting a position of the at least one special symbol in a predetermined manner from the first position to the second position.

4. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein displaying in a first game a first array of randomly selected symbols comprises displaying in the first game the first array of randomly selected symbols appearing on a plurality of virtual reel strips, the at least one special symbol being on at least one reel strip in a fixed position relative to other symbols on the reel strip.

5. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein displaying in a first game a first array of randomly selected symbols comprises displaying in the first game the first array of randomly selected symbols by a gaming machine appearing on a plurality of virtual reel strips, wherein the at least one special symbol is not in a fixed position on a virtual reel strip.

6. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein displaying in a first game a first array of randomly selected symbols by a gaming machine comprises selecting the at least one special symbol to appear in the first array based on a non-random event.

7. (cancelled)

8. (cancelled)

9. (original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the at least one special symbol comprises a plurality of special symbols.

10. (original) The method of Claim 1 further comprising terminating the use of the at least one special symbol after the at least one special symbol is used in a winning combination of symbols.

11. (original) The method of Claim 1 further comprising terminating the use of the at least one special symbol after a predetermined number of games.

12. (original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the at least one special symbol has a wild card function.

13. (original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the at least one special symbol is a high value symbol.

14. (original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the at least one special symbol has a multiplier function.

15. (original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the at least one special symbol triggers a bonus game.

16. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein the first array of symbols is a 5x3 array.

17. (original) The method of Claim 1 wherein granting an award comprises granting an award based on combinations of symbols across one or more pay lines.

18. (cancelled)

19. (original) The method of Claim 1 wherein new special symbols are generated in one or more additional games and are randomly shifted in position during subsequent games.

20. (currently amended) A gaming device comprising:

a first display screen for displaying a first game, the first game displaying a first array of symbols on a first set of virtual reels, certain combinations of symbols across at least one pay line determining an award to a player;

a second display screen for displaying a second game, the second game displaying a second array of symbols on a second set of virtual reels, certain combinations of symbols determining an award to a player; and

at least one processor for carrying out the following method:

displaying on the first display screen, in the first game, the first array of randomly selected symbols on the first set of virtual reels, the first array including at least one special symbol in a first position in the first array;

granting any award to the player for the first game based upon combinations of symbols across the first set of virtual reels displayed in the first game including combinations of symbols that include the at least one special symbol as part of a combination of symbols;

concurrently displaying on the second display screen, in the second game, the second array of randomly selected symbols on the second set of virtual reels, the second array of symbols being randomly selected independently of the first array of symbols;

shifting a position of the at least one special symbol in the first array from the first position to a second position in the second array on the second display screen, wherein the at least one shifted special symbol is combinable with the randomly selected symbols in the second array to form winning combinations of symbols; and

granting any award to the player for the second game based upon combinations of the symbols across the second set of virtual reels displayed in

the second game including combinations of symbols that include the at least one special symbol as part of a combination of symbols.

21. (previously presented) The device of Claim 20 wherein shifting a position of the at least one special symbol in the first array from the first position to the second position comprises randomly shifting a position of the at least one special symbol.

22. (cancelled)

23. (original) The device of Claim 20 wherein the at least one special symbol comprises a plurality of special symbols.

24. (original) The device of Claim 20 further comprising terminating the use of the at least one special symbol after the at least one special symbol is used in a winning combination of symbols.

25. (original) The device of Claim 20 wherein the at least one special symbol has a wild card function.

26. (original) The device of Claim 20 wherein the at least one special symbol is a high value symbol.

27. (original) The device of Claim 20 wherein the at least one special symbol has a multiplier function.

28. (original) The device of Claim 20 wherein the at least one special symbol triggers a bonus game.

29. (previously presented) The device of Claim 20 wherein the first array of symbols is a 5x3 array.

30. (original) The device of Claim 20 wherein granting an award comprises granting an award based on combinations of symbols across one or more pay lines.

31. (previously presented) The device of Claim 20 wherein the at least one special symbol is selected at random to be included in the first array.